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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [EAID](#) [AORC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: TEACHERS BACK DOWN FROM STRIKE THREAT

REF: A. CONAKRY 0684
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0690

[1](#)1. (SBU) Leaders of Guinea's teachers' union (FSPE-SLECG) met with Prime Minister Souare on November 10 to discuss GoG progress towards meeting the commitments it made to the teachers in June, as part of a negotiated agreement to end a three day national teacher strike. Union leaders initially told Embassy staff that they would not be meeting with the Prime Minister or any other government officials because they had already negotiated an agreement and did not see any reason to re-open negotiations. They later agreed to meet with the PM, saying that they did not want to appear as if they were opposed to negotiation (reftels).

[1](#)2. (SBU) Louis M'Bemba Soumah, Secretary General of FSPE-SLECG, told Pol LES on November 11 that the meeting with the PM went very well. He noted that the PM seemed open and was clearly a "man of dialogue." Soumah said that the PM offered to see union leaders at any time, emphasizing that the GoG remains committed to meeting the teachers' demands. Soumah added that the World Bank's \$10 million grant for education is a timely intervention that will help the GoG address the union's most immediate needs.

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to Soumah, the PM stressed that he needed the unions' assistance to help maintain peace and stability in Guinea. The PM reportedly mentioned that Guinea will reach the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) completion point at the end of December, and emphasized that any unrest or general instability could derail the HIPC process. The PM added that with HIPC completion and the subsequent reduction in national debt, the GoG will have more financial resources available to meet critical demands.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Soumah told Pol LES that as long as the GoG demonstrates its willingness to work together to resolve the teachers' issues, the union will continue to dialogue.

COMMENT

[1](#)5. (SBU) The World Bank grant seems to have satisfied the teachers' union that the GoG will be able to meet its commitments in the medium term. The PM's comments about HIPC debt relief suggest that the GoG is focused on meeting the criteria to qualify for the program at the end of the year, thereby freeing up much needed additional funds in January. A discussion with the World Bank Representative to Guinea on November 13, reported septel, provides more insights into the GoG's perspective on the HIPC program. END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC